

Matisse



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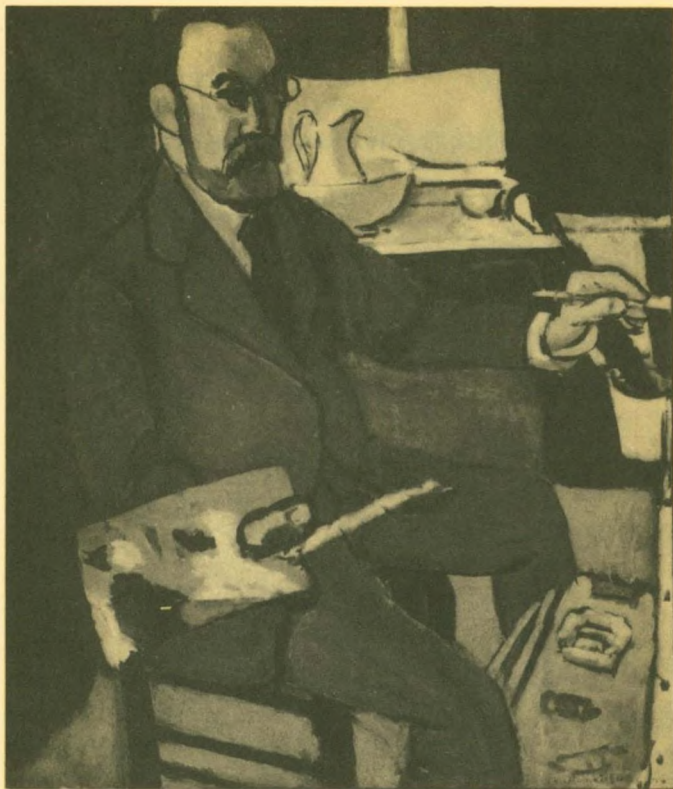


Plate 1. SELF-PORTRAIT. 1918. Oil. Collection the artist, Nice

HENRI
MATISSE

(1869 -)

text by

CLEMENT GREENBERG



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MILTON S. FOX, Editor



Plate 2. STUDY OF A WOMAN. 1936. Ink. Pierre Matisse Gallery, N. Y.

Henri-Matisse

Henri Emile Benoît Matisse was born in Le Cateau-Cambrésis in northern France on December 31, 1869, the elder of two sons, and grew up in the nearby town of Bohain-en-Vermandois. Intended for the law and eventually his father's grain business, he went to high school in St. Quentin, then to the University in Paris, returning afterwards to St. Quentin to clerk in a law office. Though bored by the law, he felt no particular inclination for anything else. While in Paris, he tells

us, he had "had no desire to visit any of the great museums, or even the annual salons of painting."

Then, in his twentieth year, after an attack of appendicitis and during "a fairly long convalescence spent in Bohain, on the advice of a neighbor and following his example, I copied the chromo models [colored reproductions] in a box of paints my mother bought me. My work, already pretty remarkable, must have contained something of my emotion." Matisse had found his calling. Frightened a little, he says, by the thought that it was too late to turn back from art now, he "plunged into work 'head down' on the principle I had heard all my young life expressed in the words 'Hurry up!' Like my parents, I hurried to work, pushed by I know not what, by a force I am aware of today as alien to my life as a normal man."

At twenty-two Matisse went back to Paris to study painting. Four years of enlightened academic training brought him the beginnings of conventional success. But in 1896, while on a painting trip with another young artist, he was struck by how much more light his companion got into a picture by use of Impressionist color than he could with his old master's palette. In another few months he had joined the avant-garde; and by 1900 he had become, thanks to a capacity to reflect on his art and draw conclusions from his own doubts and hesitations, leader of the most adventurous of the younger painters in Paris.

When they showed together at the Salon d'Aut-



Plate 3. STUDY OF A NUDE. 1935. Ink. Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York

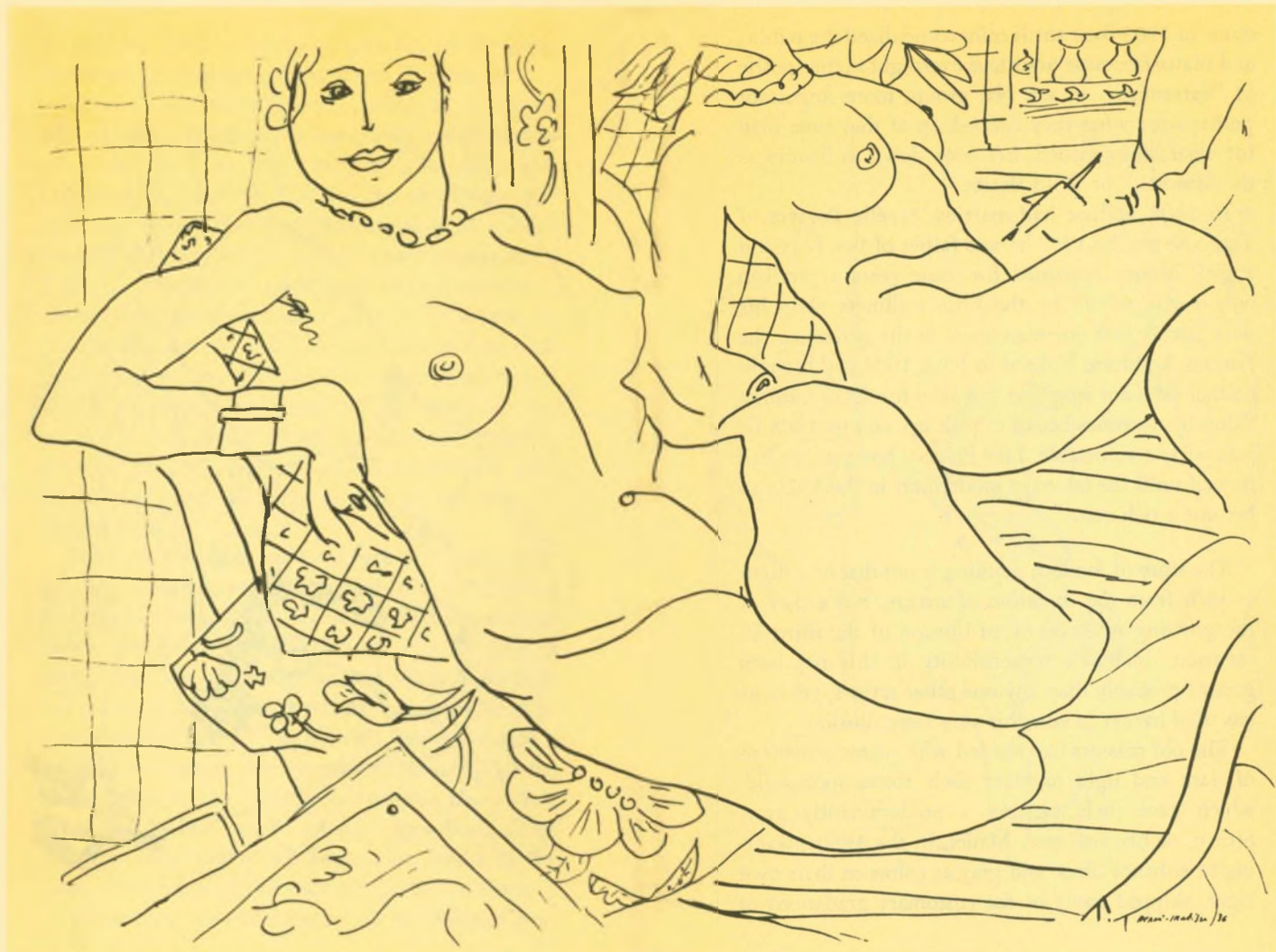


Plate 4. STUDY OF A NUDE. 1936. Ink. Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York

omne in 1905 their shrill color scandalized the public, and Matisse became notorious overnight as the apostle of "extremism" in art. His group, more important perhaps for what they opened up at that time than for what they finished, has gone down in history as the "Fauves," or Wild Beasts.

In 1898 Matisse had married Amélie Payayre of Toulouse and by 1902 he was father of two boys and a girl. Money remained for some years a problem only partly solved by the little millinery shop his wife ran. A first one-man show in the gallery of the famous Ambroise Vollard in June, 1904 had brought neither sales nor attention, but after the 1905 Autumn Salon his fortunes began to pick up, and by 1908 he was fairly comfortable. Like Picasso, however, he had to wait until the boom in modern art in the 1920s to become a rich man.

* * *

The story of modern painting is not that of a flight as such from the imitation of nature, but rather of the growing rejection of an illusion of the third dimension. Matisse's responsibility in this has been greater probably than any one other artist's, yet none has tried harder to save this very same illusion.

The old masters had shaded with many gradations of dark and light to make their forms look solid, which gave their pictures a predominantly gray, brown, or blackish cast. Manet, in the 1860s, wanting to enhance black and gray as colors in their own right, skipped many of the customary gradations of

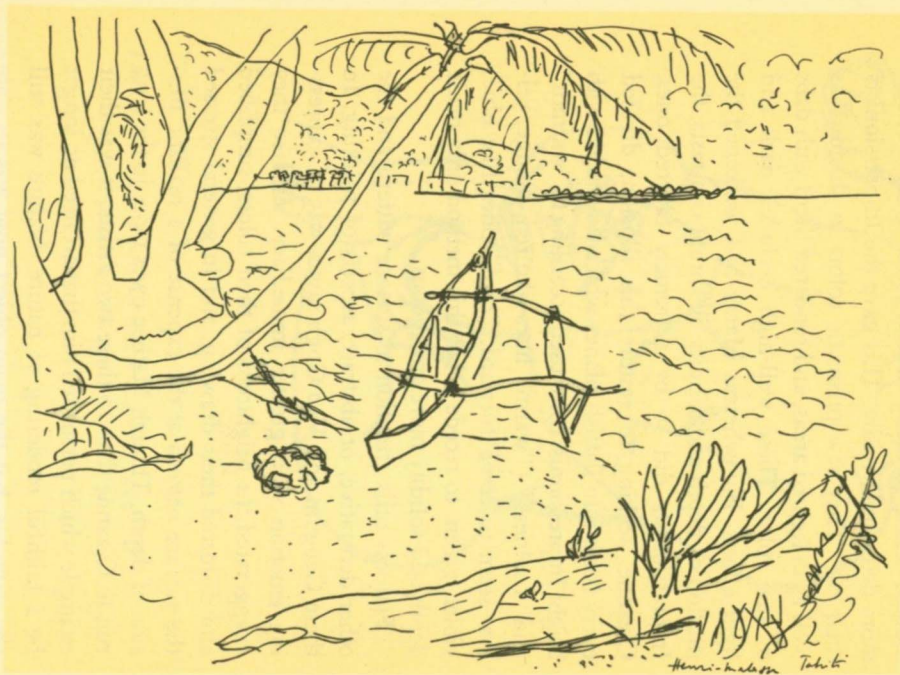
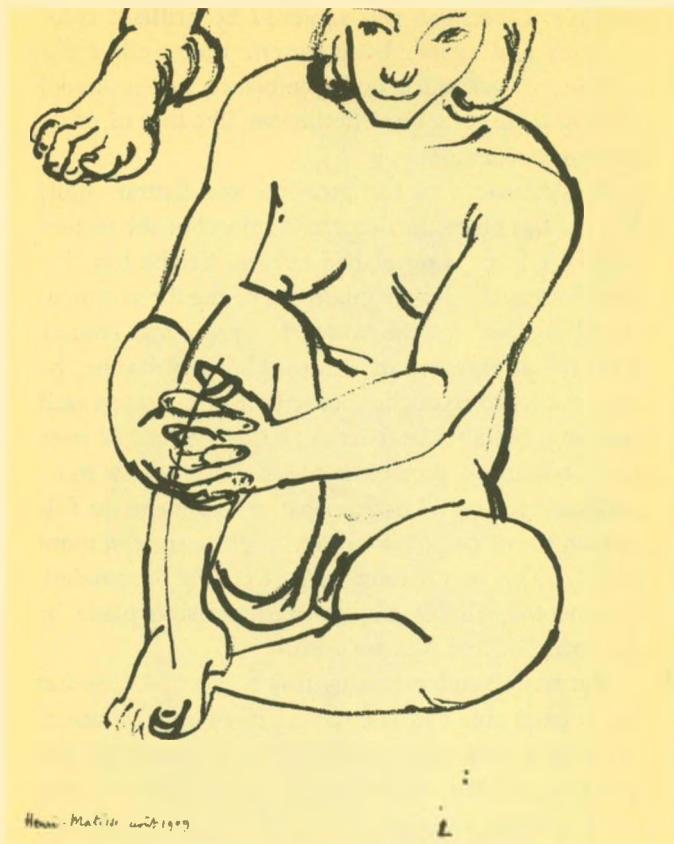


Plate 5. TAHITIAN LANDSCAPE. 1935. Ink. Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York

shading, thus sharpening the contrasts between dark and light, and shape and shape. Color, no longer muffled under so many neutral tones, came through more flatly and vividly. This gave the Impressionists their cue. They saw prismatic colors in shadows as well as in lighted areas, and rendered them with dabs of raw color. These well-nigh excluded dark and light effects. But whereas Manet had weakened the illusion of depth and solidity by abrupt contrasts, the Impressionists did so by extremely blurred ones. Cézanne, seeking to restore this illusion, divided every form into flattish planes which he shaded with bright Impressionist color used according to "warmth" and "coolness" ("warm" hues like red, orange, yellow seem to come forward; "cool" ones like blue, violet, green, to recede); but this method only made depth and solidity more ambiguous.

Flatness calls attention to surface pattern and the other decorative, or abstract, aspects of painting. In these Gauguin and Van Gogh saw a way of expressing emotion with greater immediacy. And so they exaggerated the brightness of their colors, simplified and distorted their drawing, and in general stressed the surface pattern at the expense of a realistic illusion of depth. Though Matisse owes more in the long run to Cézanne than to these two artists, it was their example which persuaded him that art need no longer be a faithful rendering of nature. Nature was still the stimulus, but the main object now was to state the intensity of the artist's response to it as directly as



*Plate 6. STUDIES OF WOMAN HOLDING KNEE. 1909. Ink
The Art Institute of Chicago*

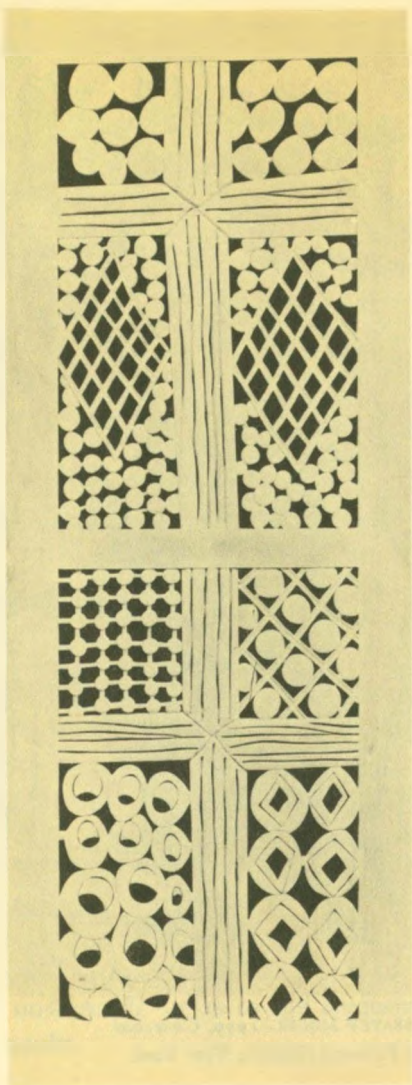
possible. Directness was achieved by brilliant color contrasts and an emphatic pattern whose effect did not depend so much on resemblance to the model as on a sensuous appeal to the eye, like that of ornament or decoration.

By saturations of the intensest and flattest color, Matisse has given the decorative impact of the picture surface a force it never had before. Yet he has also tried to retain at least a minimum of the three-dimensional illusion, for he wants to keep some contact with the appearance of nature. Unlike Cézanne, he does not try to reconcile these conflicting aims in each painting, but alternates from phase to phase, or even from picture to picture, between a flat and a more realistic approach (as the separate comments to follow on the color plates will try to make clear in more detail). This may account in part for the unrounded, fragmented, almost disjointed impression made by the total body of Matisse's work.

But more fundamentally, it is because Matisse has never been able to come to rest in any one solution, no matter how successful, to the problems of flat painting. In this constant questioning of his own work—which has gone on just as much during periods of supposed relaxation—we recognize the type of the great modern artist. That Matisse strove for serenity and at times condescended to elegance and erotic charm ought not deceive us as to the doubts underneath—or as to the frequent loftiness of the results.



*Plate 7. SEATED MODEL. 1939. Charcoal
Curt Valentin Gallery, New York*



*Plate 8. DOOR TO THE CONFESSIONAL. 1951. Carved Wood
Chapel of the Rosary, Vence. Photo M. Bérard*

COLOR PLATES

PLATE 9

Painted about 1902

NOTRE DAME, PARIS

Lewyt Collection, New York

16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

This little view was painted before Matisse discovered himself as a Fauve. A few years later he would not have let aerial perspective mute the cathedral and sky into such tender pinks, lavenders, gray-blues, pale yellows; nor would he have used heavier color to bring the foreground forward. And in any case he would not have used so many intermediary shades of color. This is a kind of shorthand, intensified Impressionism, spontaneous to the exclusion of any program. The sun has just come out after the rain, and the artist catches the effect from his apartment window over the Seine before the dampness has had time to evaporate. The way the paint is laid in may look slapdash, but each quick touch of color actually notes a shift of light and hue in the subject. An unpondered balancing of warm and cool tones assures the unity of the whole—a unity strong enough to digest the thick, opaque bands of paint in the right foreground. Everything melts and floats in this wonderful picture.

PLATE IO

Painted in 1903

GUITARIST

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Ralph F. Colin, New York

21½ x 15"

Between 1900 and 1903 Matisse worked intermittently in a "dark" manner, seeking a firmer grasp of the means to a concrete illusion of volume and depth. Often in art a procedure about to lose its meaningfulness will be that much the more emphasized in hope of preserving it, but will thereby only become the sooner exhausted and begin to do the opposite of what it is supposed to. This is what is happening with dark and light shading in this picture.

Because the darks are so heavily blocked in, they begin to act decoratively as well as descriptively, flattening the figure instead of modeling it; the color relations, not the shading, are what pry it away from the shallow, variegated backdrop (of which so many other and more vivid versions will appear in Matisse's later art). The bright face of the guitar, slanting across the figure, creates depth and continuity of depth. And the entire composition revolves around the exactly centered black hole, which also acts, rather abruptly and ambiguously, to lock the plane of the figure to that of the dark gap between curtain and wall on the right.

PLATE I I

Painted in 1905

WOMAN WITH THE HAT

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Haas, San Francisco

32 x 23½"

This canvas states Matisse's original procedure as a Fauve. The utterly unshaded and shadowless colors, however much at variance with nature, are not arrived at arbitrarily. Each change of hue "models" a shift of plane, as with Cézanne, and in addition the "law of complementaries" and "simultaneous contrasts" is followed. Two colors are complementary if their light beams, fused in correct proportion, give a grayish white; each of these same two colors simultaneously enhances the brilliance of the other when contrasted—so the Impressionists held. Roughly, the complementary pairs are red and green, orange and blue, and yellow and violet. Thus Matisse sees green in the skin as the complementary evoked by its natural pink; paints the hair an orange red to make it complementary to the bluish green in the adjacent part of the hat; and finds blue behind the neck because of the latter's yellow. The somewhat acid effect, here as in other Fauve paintings, is due to the yellowish greens, greenish blues, pinkish reds, and dull oranges—in other words, to a tendency to seek yellow everywhere.

A short while later Matisse began to work in fewer, larger, and more homogeneous areas of color.

PLATE 12

Painted in 1897

DINNER TABLE (LA DESSERTÉ)

*Collection Mr. and Mrs. Edward G. Robinson
Beverly Hills, Calif.*

$39\frac{1}{2} \times 51\frac{1}{2}$ "

Matisse did this picture because his teacher, Gustave Moreau, advised him to execute an ambitious work as a master-piece, in the original sense, to show he had finished his apprenticeship as a painter. The year before, he had discovered Impressionism and he makes no bones about it here. But the scintillation of glass-ware, crockery, and silver is rendered in tones of crusty white, not by iridescent touches; local color in the darker areas remains intact, and is modulated in more or less traditional chiaroscuro. Thus the effect comes closer to Fantin-Latour's half-academic Impressionism than to the authentic Impressionism of Monet *et al.* in the 1870s. What is quite Impressionist, however, is the composition, with its busy foreground placed in depth by being seen from above; also, three-quarters of the rectangle is fully lighted, in contradistinction to the traditional practice dating from the sixteenth century of swathing at least half the canvas in full or half shadow. Manet and the Impressionists had made painting bright again, indoors as well as outdoors.

PLATE 13

Painted about 1915

GOLDFISH

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Samuel A. Marx, Chicago

57½ x 44"

This, the last of six "goldfish" paintings, is certainly one of the artist's very greatest works. Alfred Barr finds the overlapping triangles in the upper right corner "unresolved," and they do seem too unmotivated for the rest of the picture, whose abstractness consists in simplification and compression, not free invention. Yet the whole needs this "fault" as it also needs the muddiness of color and plane just below it (though the picture could stand a cleaning). The main structure triumphs by its economical and monumental clarity. Every line, faired to straightness or an exact curve, delivers its full force to the surface design.

The broad black-gray band uniting top and bottom (see plates 18 and 19) here covers only part of the canvas's width. Inside it we *read*, as Mr. Barr says, rather than *feel* the space occupied by the table. As in Cubism, almost every plane is ambiguous and can be seen as on the surface or behind it: thus the transparent wedge of the tabletop lets the background come forward to the actual surface, yet its blue also insists on retreating—in part because it is such a cool, out-of-doors color.

PLATE 14

Painted in 1919

WHITE PLUMES

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

29 x 24"

Antoinette, Matisse's constant model during 1919 (she is seen again in plate 20), seems to have inspired him in the direction of a peculiarly grave yet obvious magnificence. The good looks of the girl, the bizarre splendor of her hat, and the rich simplicity of color and design are at first sight almost cloying. Yet, though Matisse has turned out his share of superficial work, this is not part of it. Responding to a subject attractive in itself and gotten up attractively, Matisse does not enhance the attractiveness in representing it, but creates an independent beauty. Antoinette's sex-appeal is so solemn as to contradict itself, what with the fixed stare of her eyes and the rigid set of her features that make her more effigy than seductive woman. What is really seductive are the appurtenances, the Indian red background, the pearly whites and grays in the feathers—that is, the paint, the disinterested paint.

PLATE 15

Painted in 1908

BATHERS WITH A TURTLE

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., St. Louis

70½ x 86¾"

Matisse has been haunted by the Venetian motif of nudes in an outdoor setting. This picture was done as he was groping his way out of "classical" Fauvism, and it owes as much to Cézanne (who had his own dream of nudes in a landscape) as to Gauguin. The problem was to adjust the figures to a background at once spacious and flat; in this the question of the "negative" or empty space between their contours and the margins of the canvas became crucial, and I am not sure it is resolved. (The difficulty recurs constantly in Matisse's art, as also in much of abstract painting.) The artist tries to "imbed" the figures by using Cézanne's device of heavy blue shading *outside* their contours in order to make these vibrate backwards into depth. But perhaps they still remain too stark. Yet the whole picture has a monumental vigor and breadth that partly make up for its faults in unity. Notice how the hues in the background subtly complement those in the foreground, and how the undertones of warmth in their coolness help them to advance and enclose the figures. And see in plate 18 how Matisse treats a similar theme in a radically different way.

portion of plate 15

PLATE 16

Painted in 1920

MEDITATION

Collection Mrs. Albert D. Lasker, New York

28 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

After 1917 Matisse no longer attempted to work out new and "heroic" solutions for the problems of flat painting, but relaxed into the arms of French tradition—which meant Chardin and Boucher as well as Manet and Delacroix.

Echoing things in the previous year's *The Artist and his Model* (plate 20), though very different in mood, the picture opposite was done, patently, in the same hotel room in Nice, and the same pink-striped tablecloth and blue-figured flower bowl again push back the seated figure. But the key is lower, the paint heavier, and the modeling more explicit.

Since 1913 or so Matisse had been using flat blacks and grays to set off bright colors; now soft earth browns, especially ocher, begin to do this office, and his color is more conventional and tempered. Here the tinted grays, the whites, and the tans on one side of the canvas bring out the sharper colors on the other side—but the first side is where our eyes rest, and this contradiction reinforces the mood.

PLATE 17

Painted about 1921

STILL LIFE WITH A LEMON

*Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Deutsch
Greenwich, Conn.*

23 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

In returning after 1917 to the beginnings of modern painting, Matisse discovered a new capacity for refinement. The approach here is Manet's, the precedent Chardin's (the first to use such clarified browns), but the result belongs entirely to Matisse himself. The relations of local color—especially, between table edge and lemon—establish the illusion of depth, not the darks and lights. The olive greens, pearly and bluish whites, velvety blacks, etcetera, float and ripple on the bosom of the darker tones as though seen through a crystalline fluid. And yet they remain firmly in place. A succinct and particular richness is obtained by simple color contrasts, delicate brush pressure, and a slightly more copious infusion of oil medium than usual.

There is something Cubist in the way the heavy wedge of light in which the glass pitcher stands jumps out of plane and breaks the integrity of the illusion; yet somehow, by rejoining the rest of the picture on the surface, it only confirms the virtual and aesthetic unity of the whole.

PLATE 18

Painted 1916-17

BATHERS BY A RIVER

Collection Henry Pearlman, New York

8'7" x 12'10"

This huge picture is one of the artist's most ambitious works at a time when he abounded in ambition and seemed able, moreover, to bring off almost everything he put his hand to. Here the color, as monochromatic as it tends to be, rescues the whole from the monotony threatened by the design and makes the monotony itself part of the triumph.

Like so much of Matisse's work in the two years before, the picture contains echoes of Cubism—in the straight up-and-down lines of the main design, and the clustered, parallel curves on the left, with their counter-curves on the right that recall Gauguin; and in the handling of anatomy, especially in the seated, wading bather upper left of center, whose body is cut into cones and rectangles not all of which belong to it. But it is very much Matisse's own kind of Cubism, and the confusions somehow strengthen the whole in spite of themselves (see commentary for plate 13). The alternation of vertical bands that make one plane of background and foreground is certainly Matisse's invention, and offers as interesting a solution to certain crucial problems of flat painting as anything in orthodox Cubism.

PLATE 19

Painted in 1911

RED STUDIO

*Museum of Modern Art, New York
(Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund)*

71¼ x 86¼"

This is the most abstract of three large interior views of his studio the artist did in 1911 (one of the other two is shown in plate 29), and is perhaps the flattest easel painting done anywhere up to that time. The uniform burnt sienna of floor and walls maintains the entire picture on a single frontal plane, depth being diagrammed in linear perspective, but hardly represented otherwise. The tension between the schematic illusion, which has a curious vividness, and the warm and insistent physical surface makes the picture's drama. The device of joining top to bottom and background to foreground by a tract of flat color, sometimes covering only part of the picture, will be seen again in many of Matisse's most ambitious and successful paintings, particularly in 1915 and 1916, and in 1947 and 1948.

The pigment does not coat the surface, but is soaked into it so that the very fabric becomes the paint surface. Matisse is, as always, indifferent to paint surface as an end in itself, and generally shuns both impasto and translucent film if he can get what he wants by more purely pictorial means.

PLATE 20

Painted in 1919

THE ARTIST AND HIS MODEL

Collection Dr. and Mrs. Harry Bakwin, New York

23 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Like *Painting Lesson* (plate 21) and other pictures and also many drawings, this shows the artist himself at work (sometimes only his hand, with paper or canvas, will appear). It is as if to hint that works of art and the activity of art are just as real as that which they picture, and inhabit the same kind of space. Elsewhere (as in plates 19 and 28) finished works are "illustrated," and the unconscious point is the same.

This delectable painting, with its stripes, the compact lucidity of its color, and its crisp drawing, incarnates the "rococo" Matisse, connoisseur of feminine flesh. "Women are," he once told Pierre Courthion, the Swiss critic, "*de grands enfants*." His detachment lets him view the female body as a consumer's article, but it also enables him to convert into a masterpiece a subject and arrangement others could use only to decorate a candy box.

portion of plate 20

PLATE 21

Painted in 1919

PAINTING LESSON

Paul Rosenberg Gallery, New York

29 x 36"

Many of the paintings Matisse did in this year are particularly pleasing because of their bland, limpid color, fluent drawing, and cozy subject matter. This picture and *The Artist and his Model* (previous plate) are cases in point. Both have a solidity and fiber, however, that are dissembled by their ingratiating qualities.

Two quasi-complementary pairs of color, yellow and pale blue, pink and pale green, tinkle to the accompaniment of browns running from the umbers in the girl's hair and the background across the ocher of the mirror frame into the thinner ocher of the artist's back and canvas. These browns and tans accentuate the freshness of the other colors.

The background is crucial, however. The thinness with which the burnt umber is scumbled in, permitting the lighter ground beneath to breathe warmth through it, brings the background forward to clasp the ovals of head and mirror instead of dropping away—as it might—to leave a dark, meaningless void. In this unassuming but perfect work the mere mechanical craft of painting provides all the vision necessary.

P L A T E 2 2

Painted in 1926

ODALISQUE WITH A TAMBOURINE

Collection Mr. and Mrs. William S. Paley, New York

28 x 21"

Since 1920 Matisse had been modeling in more pronounced darks and lights, sometimes hollowing the background, but much more often flattening it into ornamental patterns reminiscent of Persian art. Here he brings it further forward on the left than the figure itself by two juts of wall, but twists it so far back on the other side—in a curve repeating the figure's—as to make it part company with the perspective of the rest of the picture. And for once, he uses the palette knife—for the red of the floor and, more importantly, to block out the mauve grays that give the planes of the nude such emphatic flatness. The crustier paint helps the color towards its dry incandescence, while the edges left by the knife blade render vividly the sharp overhead lighting.

Although a brilliant feat, this work is not quite as successful as it ought to be; the two vertical bands of wall on the left remain unintegrated with the whole, and the picture seems to stop where the red floor ends.

PLATE 23

Painted in 1927

DECORATIVE FIGURE
ON AN ORNAMENTAL BACKGROUND

Museum of Modern Art, Paris

51½ x 38¾"

The problem of reconciling the illusion of depth with the brute fact of the flat picture plane presented itself most often to Matisse as that of fitting the relief of the human form into a shallow, densely patterned background. In this unusual painting the problem is stated in such a way as to render a solution well-nigh impossible. The nude can hold her own against the clangorous wall and floor only by her massive modeling and intense, saturated color. These, however, thrust her forward so violently that she bursts the unity of pictorial space. And in any case she has no room behind her in which to recede, though the artist has tried to make it by shading the wall heavily next to her face.

This is one time that Matisse let his concerns as a sculptor intrude upon his painting. The distortions and simplifications of the nude's anatomy reflect those in certain of his bronzes done around the same time. He had been working off and on in plaster, clay, and bronze since 1899, and for all his debt to Rodin, had made himself in a modest and occasional way one of the very finest sculptors of our time.

PLATE 24

Painted in 1918

MONTALBAN

Collection Mrs. Alexina Matisse, Lebanon, N. J.

$28\frac{3}{4} \times 35\frac{3}{4}$ "

That Matisse himself feels no predilection for landscape does not make him any the less great as a landscape-painter—the greatest, perhaps, of the century. Artists are just as unconscious of their own true strengths and weaknesses as the rest of us.

He never painted better landscapes than in 1918. The perfection of this one is not achieved at the expense of power. Witness the charged restraint with which he plays the light, arbitrary-seeming blue of the tree trunks and roofs against the dun grays and browns further back. The curve of the road is sharpened, Cézanne-wise, to flatten it into a horizontal plane parallel to the picture surface; a higher arc would have pushed space back too far on the right. For here Matisse is using the old master's trick of massing a landscape forward on one side while opening it into distance on the other (Corot's *View near Volterra* in the National Gallery, Washington, would be an example). What is amazing is how he makes darks and lights act simultaneously as local colors and as means of shading. Hardly anything in painting since Cézanne rivals this picture as a synthesis of tradition and modernity.

portion of plate 24

PLATE 25

Painted in 1943

TABAC ROYAL

Collection Mrs. Albert D. Lasker, New York

25 x 32"

The garish spotting of the colors, themselves tending towards acidity, and the sullied purity of the contrasts might be interpreted as the artist's own comment on this set-piece of elegance painted in the German-occupied France of 1943. Underneath the shininess of the oil, the blue and red of the wall turn somber, and the faded look of the tans makes the brighter colors strident. The feeling in this picture is uneasy, unreconciled with itself—as so often in these years when Matisse continued to insist on treating the human model as but one more in a collection of inert objects. Yet beyond the color an exactly sensed and beautifully tightened piece of drawing and design is revealed. The parallel sets of planes slanting from right to left all the way across the canvas create depth, and at the same time keep some order among the many small spots of color. Nevertheless, this does not altogether succeed in suppressing a certain jumpiness or clutter.

portion of plate 25

PLATE 26

Painted 1929-31

GIRL IN A YELLOW DRESS

Baltimore Museum of Art (Cone Collection)

39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 32"

This is one of the few definitely successful pictures of a period of transition (1926 to 1935) during which Matisse wavered between a flat and a modeled manner more uncertainly than ever before. The figure reminds one somewhat of his 1918-20 style, and is a superlative example of brush-drawing: that is, line and shading are rendered, and color filled in, with no attempt to cover up or fuse the summary touches of a flat-cut brush.

The dress is sectioned into planes that keep parallel with the surface even where they seem to slant away; and if the figure advances from the window recess it is more by reason of color oppositions and its heavy if intermittent outline than by modeling or shading. The color relies greatly on the play of complementaries, with ocher mediating between yellow and blue, and red and green, and at the same time complementing the intenser blue of the sea outside the window.

The figure's dumpy, bottle-like symmetry and mute face counteract what tendency it has towards fashion-magazine charm.

PLATE 27

Painted in 1937

LADY IN BLUE

Collection Mr. and Mrs. John Wintersteen, Philadelphia

36½ x 29"

In 1935 Matisse, simplifying his art, abandoned shading altogether and made the figure as flat as its background, relying on line and the "optical" properties of color—oppositions of warm and cool color—to give it relief. In this picture it defines itself against the wall by emblematic curves and counter-curves, and by the airy blue of the dress contrasted with the tile-like plots of color around it. The artist, attacking head-on the problem of flat easel-painting, came dangerously near the poster in these years.

With sweat and concentration, he went too often where his feeling could not quite follow. Starting with a somewhat realistic statement of the subject, he would in this period carry a painting through as many as twenty-two different stages in order to arrive at the most "permanent" definition of his "sensation." (The wonder is that the paint still looked fresh in the end.) But such studiedness made him his own art critic, and he would too often be satisfied with only the most static of resolutions.

PLATE 28

Painted in 1948

LARGE INTERIOR IN RED

Museum of Modern Art, Paris

57½ x 38¼"

In 1909-10 Matisse "expressed the idea of an absolute blue" (his own words) in two large decorative canvases called *Dance*. Now he expresses an "absolute red," by a similar "saturation of the picture surface." In 1947-48 he painted a series of interiors in which the figure is either absent or subordinated, and that are deeper in color and more open than the pictures of the decade previous. The painting opposite is the masterpiece of the group, and a summit of Matisse's art. He had written in 1908: "What interests me most is neither still life nor landscape but the human figure." Yet he has been far more consistently successful where he omits the figure or reduces its importance. Thus, see the great *Window* of 1916 (plate 30), which this picture so much resembles. And notice once again how foreground and background run together on the same color plane.

After thirty years, Matisse has returned to a grand style, and to the startling and profound simplicity that makes him unique.

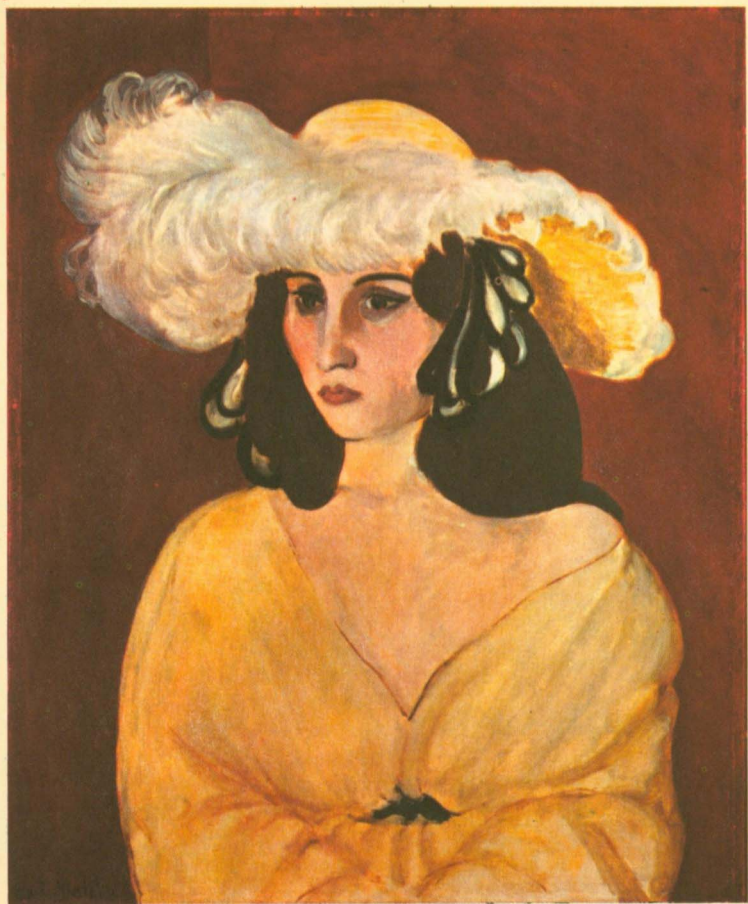




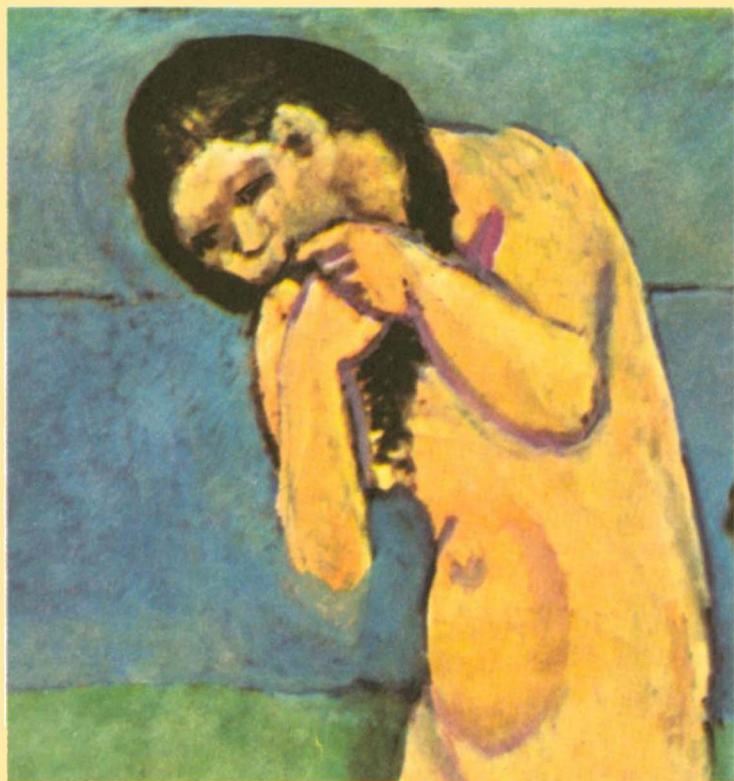






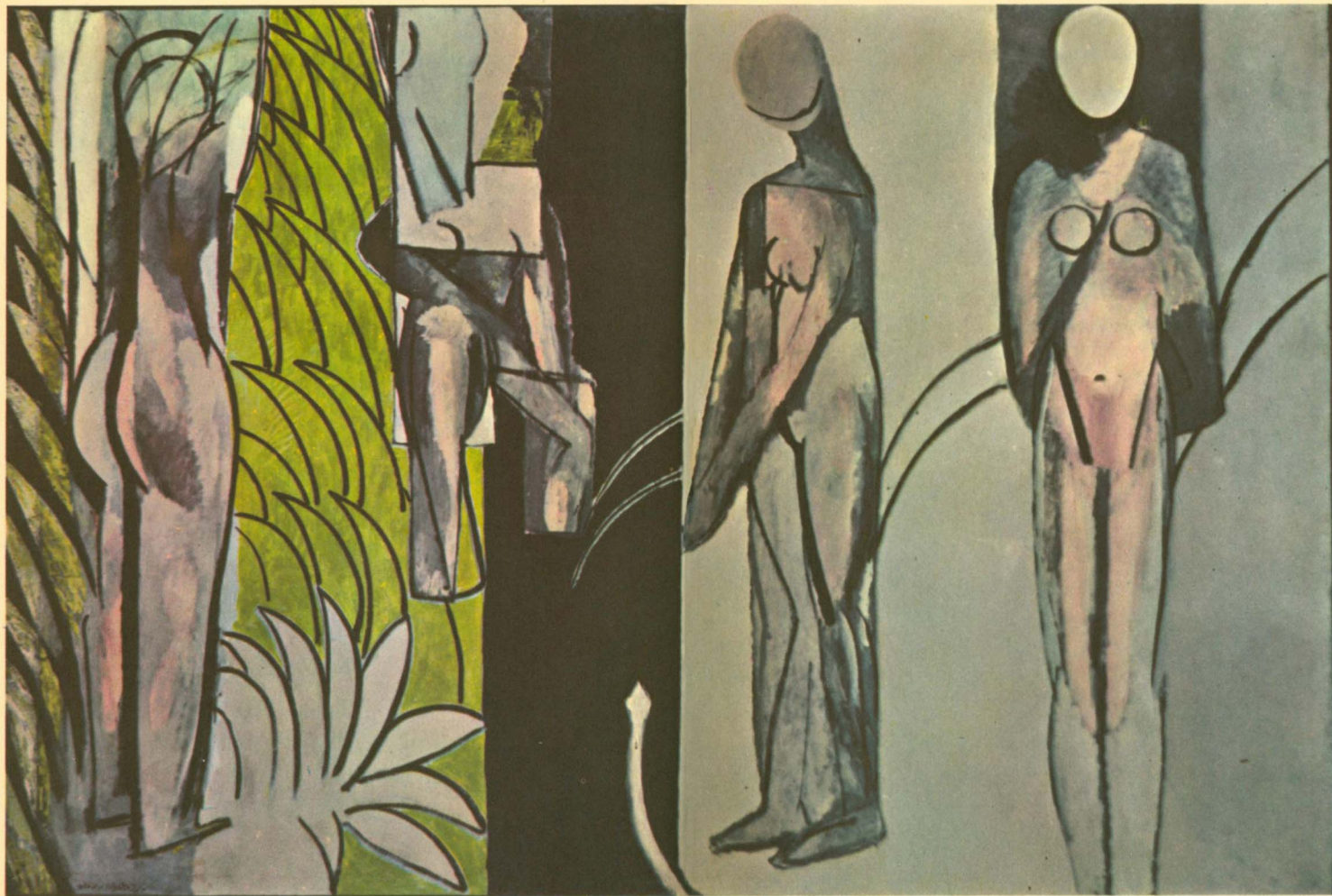


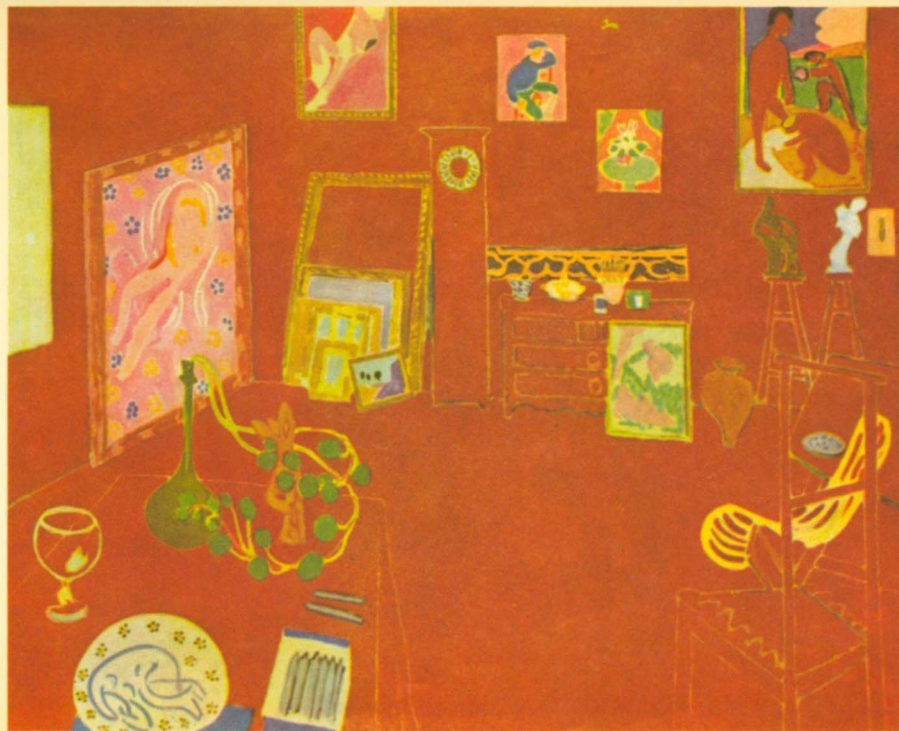


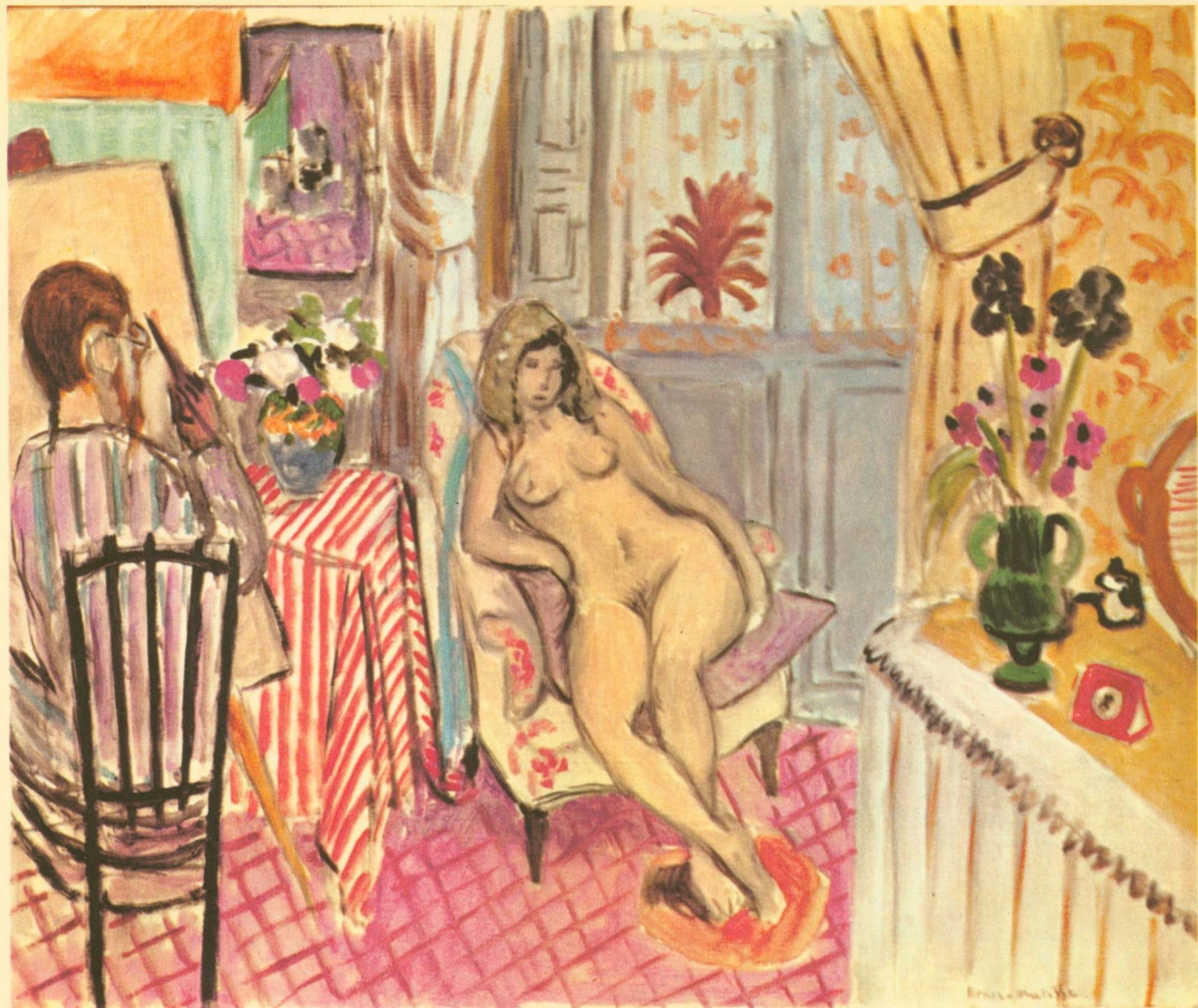


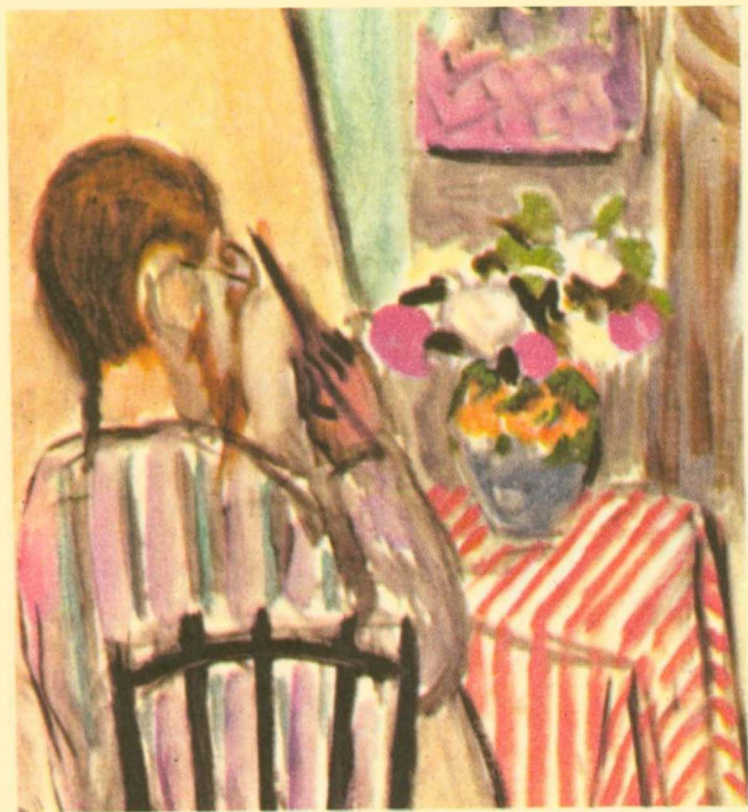


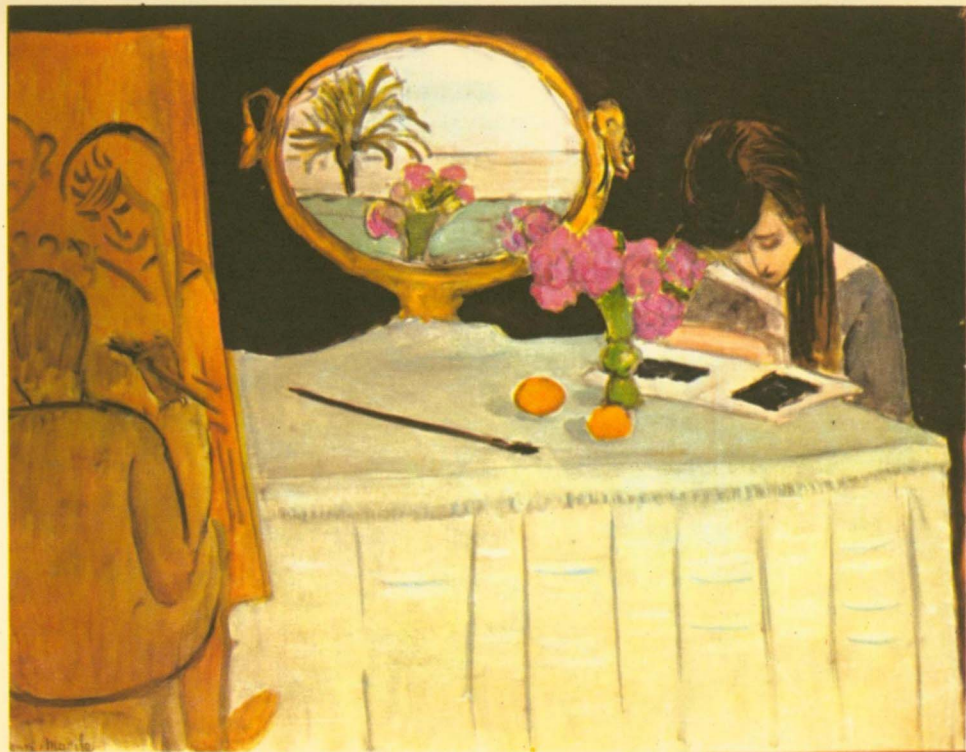


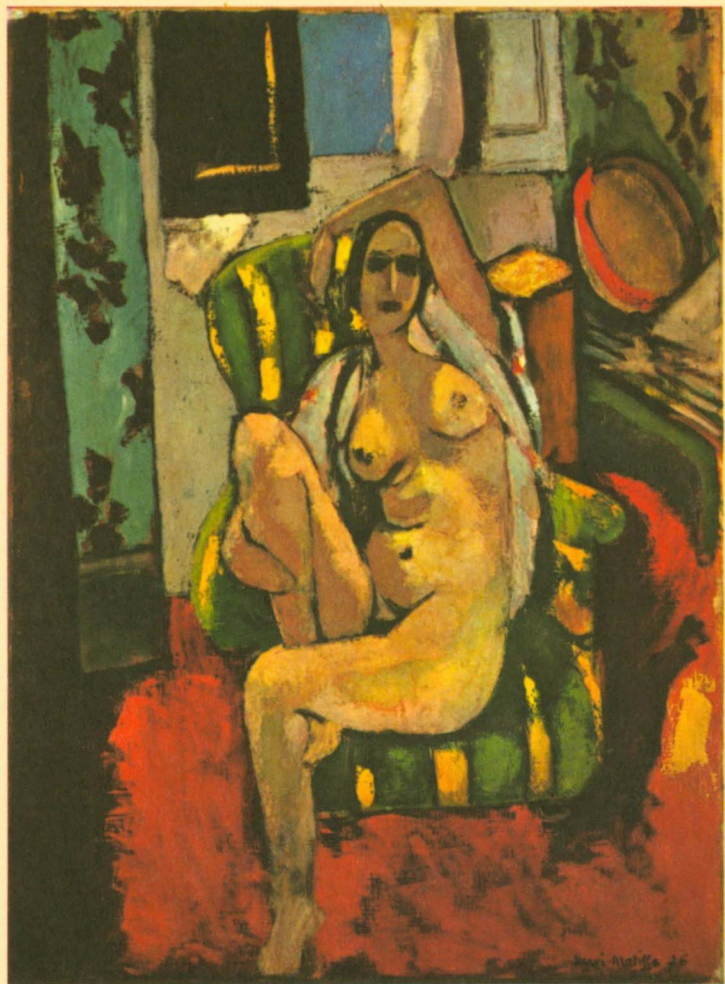










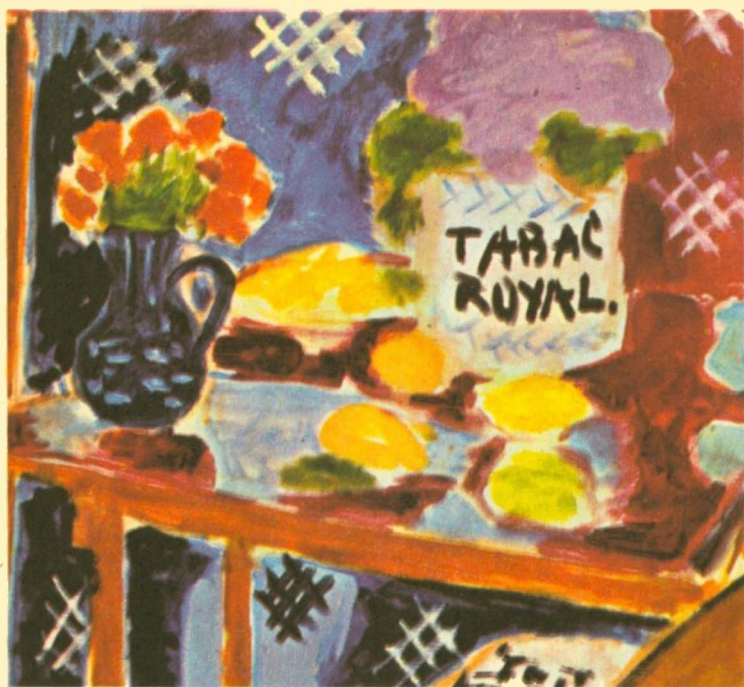




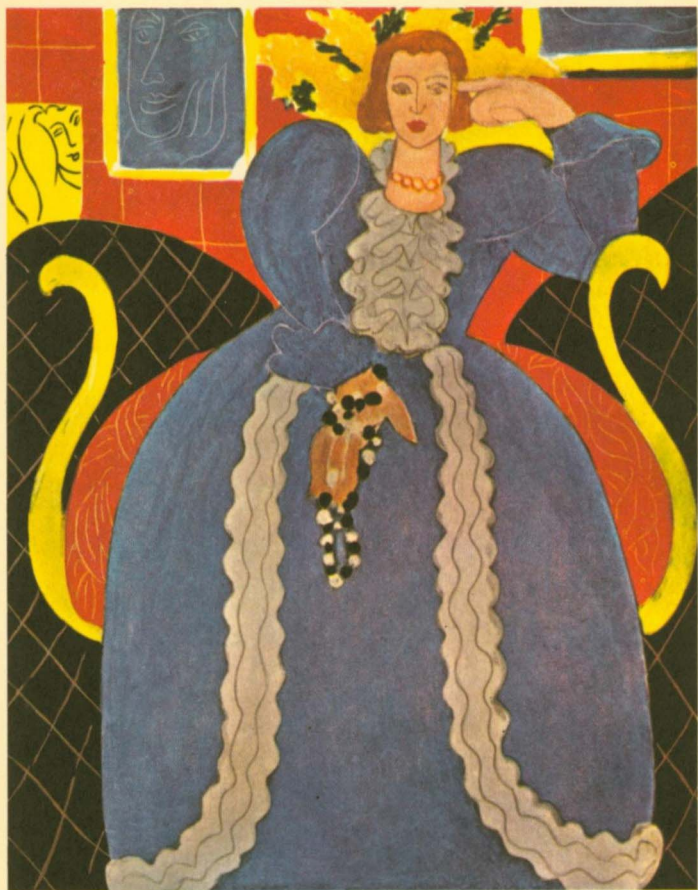


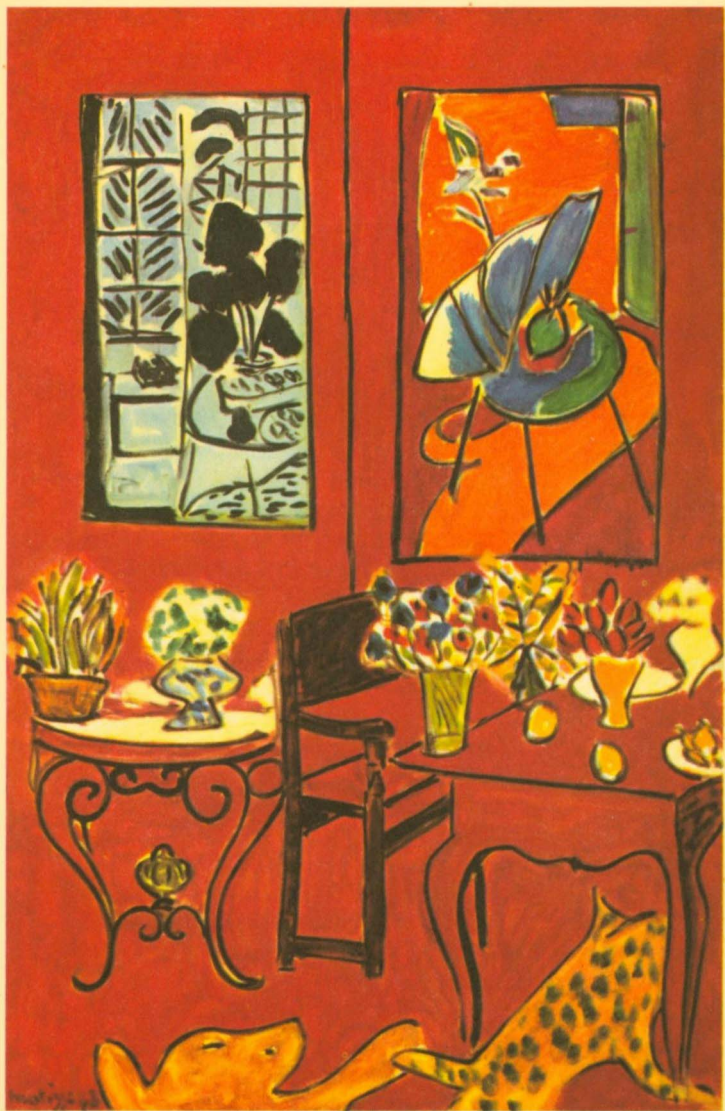












BLACK AND WHITE

P L A T E S



*Plate 29. THE PAINTER'S STUDIO. 1911. Oil
Museum of Modern Western Art, Moscow*



Plate 30. THE WINDOW, 1916. Oil
Detroit Institute of Arts



*Left and right: Three bronze
heads of JEANETTE. 1910-11
Museum of Modern Art, N. Y.
(Lillie P. Bliss Bequest)*



VENUS. 1919. Bronze. Curt Valentin Gallery, N. Y.



RECLINING NUDE, 1907. *Bronze. Museum of Modern Art, N. Y.*



Plate 33. DRAWING. 1947. Charcoal
Collection Samuel A. Berger, New York



Plate 34. DRAWING. 1948. Ink
Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York



Plate 35. ODALISQUE WITH MAGNOLIAS. 1923. *Lithograph. Private collection, New York*

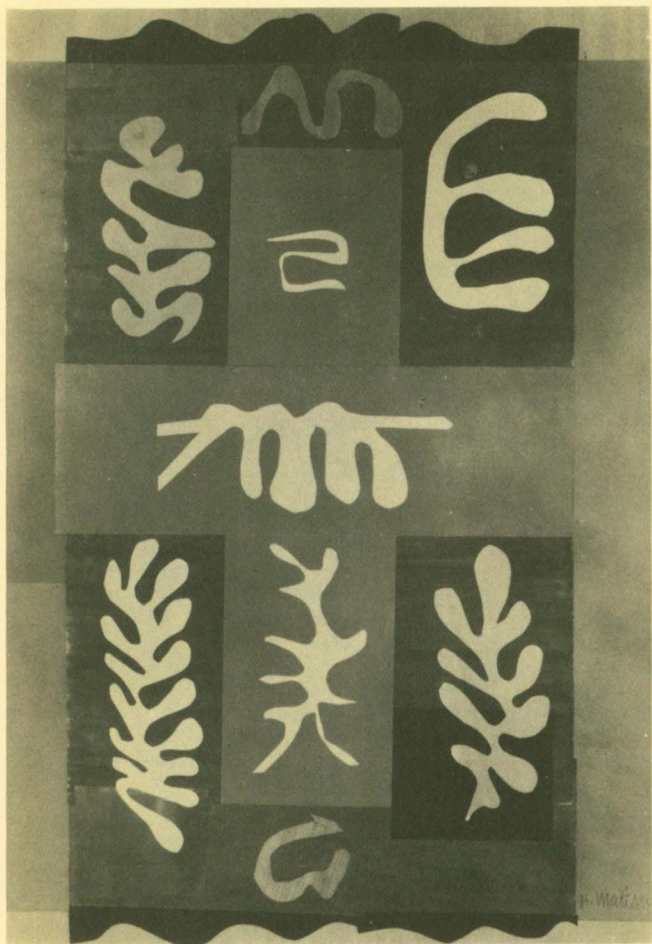


Plate 36. COMPOSITION WITH RED CROSS. 1947-48
Paper cutout and gouache. Niveau Gallery, N. Y.

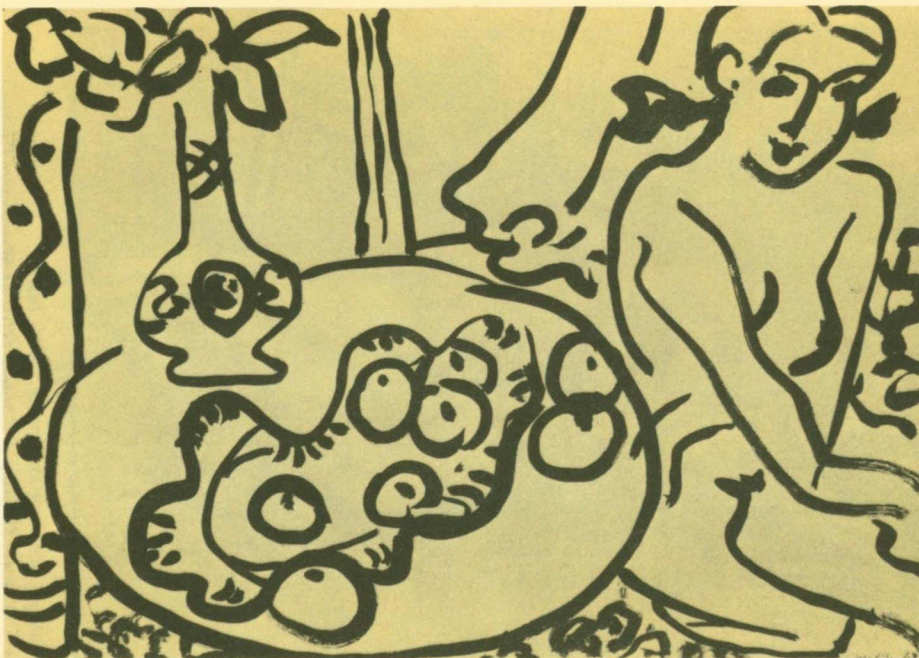


Plate 37. DRAWING. 1948. Ink. Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York

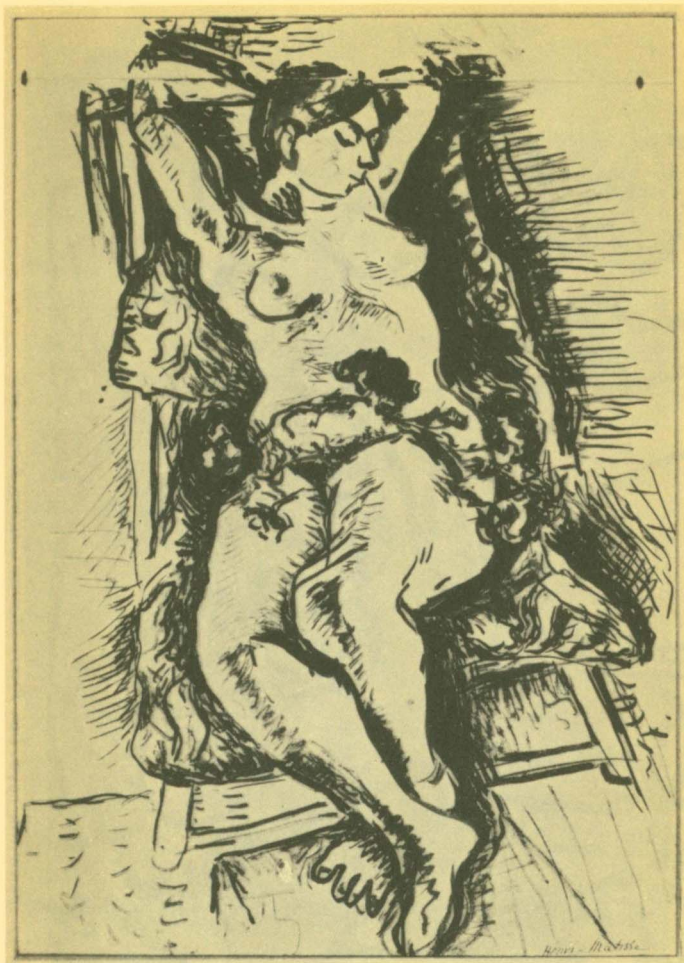
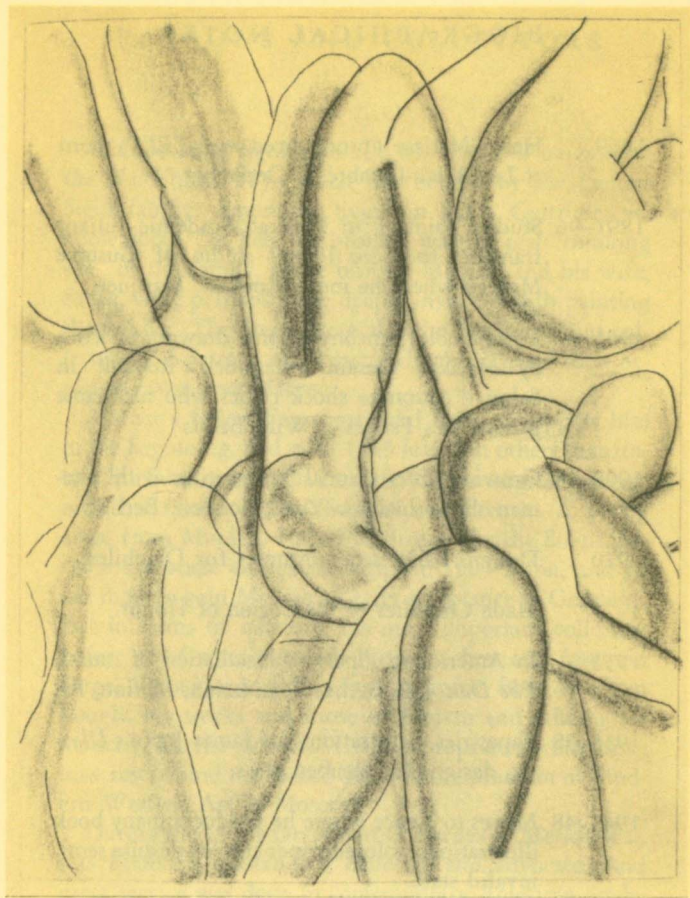


Plate 38. NUDE IN ARMCHAIR. 1906. Ink

The Art Institute of Chicago (Gift of Mrs. Potter Palmer)



*Plate 39. CIRCE. 1935. Etching for James Joyce's "Ulysses"
Museum of Modern Art, New York*

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- 1869 Henri Matisse (pronounced *mah-TEES*) born at Le Cateau-Cambrésis, December 31.
- 1891–96 Studies painting in Paris at Académie Julian; transfers to more liberal studio of Gustave Moreau where he meets Rouault, Marquet.
- 1905 Violent color, unconventional drawing of work by Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck, Rouault in Salon d'Automne shock critics who nickname group "Les Fauves" (Wild Beasts).
- 1908–13 Growing international recognition with one-man shows in New York, London, Berlin.
- 1920 Designs ballet sets, costumes for Diaghilev.
- 1925 Made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.
- 1933 In America to supervise installation of mural, *The Dance*, in Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pa.
- 1935–38 Tapestries, illustrations for James Joyce's *Ulysses*, designs for Steuben glass.
- 1943–48 Moves to Vence where he produces many book illustrations, colored paper cutouts despite semi-invalid state.
- 1948–51 Designs and decorates Chapel of the Rosary in Vence, consecrated 1951. Major retrospective exhibitions in Philadelphia, Lucerne, Nice, Paris, Tokyo, and New York.

PATRONS AND COLLECTORS

Matisse's first significant sale was of the *Woman with the Hat* (plate 11), which was bought by the famous Stein family, Americans living in Paris. Gertrude, we know about, but Leo, her brother, was the real "thinking eye" of the family, while brother Michael and his wife, Sarah, were perhaps more deeply involved with painting than either. The Steins were also the first important collectors and patrons of Picasso, whom Gertrude soon began to favor over Matisse.

Matisse's fellow-Frenchmen did little to support him in the beginning, and until 1945 less than others to maintain his fame once he had won it. Of his original patrons only his friend Marcel Sembat was French. A young artist from Munich, Hans Purrmann, like the Steins, became a Matisse enthusiast with the 1905 Salon, and he did most to gain Matisse an early acceptance in Germany. But in terms of quantity, his most important collectors before 1914 were two rich Russians, first and foremost Sergei Shchukin, and then Ivan Morosov, both of whom bought his works and those of Picasso and other great moderns by the dozens. Their expropriated collections now rest behind the locked doors of the Museum of Modern Western Art in Moscow.

During the 1920s Dr. Albert C. Barnes of Merion, Pa., was Matisse's outstanding collector and advocate. And great service was done to contemporary American art by Hans Hofmann, the German-born painter and teacher, in that he kept Matisse's influence and example to the front among the younger artists in New York during the late 1930s and early 1940s, when the tide of opinion was going the other way. Hofmann, above all, is responsible for the final reversal of that tide in the United States.

SOME OTHER BOOKS ABOUT MATISSE

- Art News Annual* (New York), November, 1951
Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia. *The Art of Henri Matisse*. New York, Scribner, 1933
Alfred H. Barr, Jr. *Matisse: His Art and His Public*. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1951
(Exhaustive documentation and critical study)
Georges Duthuit. *The Fauvist Painters*. New York, Wittenborn, Schultz, 1950
Roger Fry. *Henri Matisse*. New York, E. Weyhe, 1935
(Urbane analysis of Matisse's art)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In a book of art, it seems particularly fitting to acknowledge the work of craftsmen who contribute to its making. The color plates were made by Litho-Art, Inc., New York. The lithography is from the presses of The Meehan-Tooker Co., Inc., New York and the binding has been done by F. M. Charlton Co., New York. The paper was made by P. H. Glatfelter & Co., York, Pa. Our deepest indebtedness is to the museums, galleries, and private collectors who graciously permitted the reproduction of their paintings, drawings, and sculpture.